ILLNESS CALLS A HALT

or a shade below, leaving him swimming in sweat and weaker than a new-born kitten. As everyone knows who has lived in the East, these acute subnormal spells are almost more alarming than raging fever, and are more exhausting to the patient. Slowly, slowly he would regain strength on Zaidu's "chicken broth," on milk and custard, and creep, decimal by decimal, towards 98·4, and each time as we congratulated ourselves that he was nearly well, and he was sitting out on the verandah, observing the life about him and chatting to the passers-by—whizz bang—he was up to 105° once more.

Nothing like our people's devotion was ever seen. Dádo would carry off soaking sheets and drenched pyjamas, wash them and dry them in the sun. Zaidu would devise and cook such invalid dishes as our scanty resources permitted. Everyone, including Sagi and the levies, wanted to sit up all night, but this I would not allow; they had their fields to till and their harvest to gather in. I had a little Meta stove and could heat milk or soup or Ovaltine during the night myself; but always Dádo slept near the bedroom door, and no admonition would drive him from it.

Again and again those many nights I listened in vain for a sound of breathing, and often I feared my patient would be too exhausted to wake to see another dawn creep up on Rakaposhi.

When the fever fiend had played his last card and lost the trick, there started a fortnight of the most gruesome headache. All his life DL has been liable to an occasional bad headache, but they usually wear out their violence in twenty-four hours. This brute went on day and night for fourteen days so that he could neither read nor write nor sleep. That seems, however, to have been the last frantic struggle of the evil spirit before being exorcised.

It wasn't till nine weeks of illness and convalescence were past that I realized that I had never for a moment felt lonely or given a thought to the absence of a doctor. The servants had been such trumps, the neighbours so sympathetic and kindly, that I was never consciously aware that the nearest white person was not even four days off in Gilgit, but 150 miles off in Rama or 300 in Kashmir (for no one stays in Gilgit

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

in the summer), or that with luck we might see a doctor in a month or two. In our little home-town there are indignation meetings because we have to travel seven miles in a motor ambulance to reach our nearest hospital. 759

Another pleasant thing had been the presence of the Indian sub-assistant surgeon in charge of the local dispensary. True when you were sick you would echo George the What-ever-it-was: "Give the doctor my compliments and say I am too ill to see him," but he had a store of any simple drugs absent from our own medicine chest and he kindly acted as sanitary inspector and supervised the disposal of the kitchen refuse, etc., and directed the activities of the sweeper. This removed a source of possible anxiety.

Altogether things might have been a lot worse. It was perfectly maddening for David to have missed all these interesting weeks of the harvest; but he had seen something of it from his window, and from the verandah, and if he was pretty fit again by mid-September we still had an entire year's cycle ahead of us. And I had sat about a good deal in the fields (within sight of the house and within earshot of his whistle—though he never blew it), and made lots of friends and taken what notes I could with as much of my mind as was on the spot. It wasn't a lot, for I was often anxious and always rather underslept. But with luck we should fill in the missing bits next year. 000

The September weather was delightful; the "bitter" heat had gone, and it was like the best days of an early English summer, but with perfect dryness and the security we never have at home that to-morrow and the day after would equally be fine. 132

Before coming we had been afraid that further knowledge might reveal all sorts of mistakes in the Grammar and the Texts (now finally in print and about to appear). We were immensely relieved to find as we worked that there was *nothing* incorrect. It seemed almost incredible. A few difficult points could be further cleared up, but there was nothing to retract. The Vocabulary proofs were beginning to come—and a hideous fag it was correcting them!—but this gave opportunity to eliminate a few question marks and occasionally to 114

durance and stamina known anywhere, and if Shipton says that the Hunzans had more endurance and stamina than these people, no higher tribute can be given.

It is my humble opinion that too much has been written about the people of Hunza by people who have never been there and know little or nothing about the actual conditions that prevail in that country. Then, too, many visitors spent most of their time taking pictures, viewing the scenery and dining at the Mir's and didn't pay much attention or learn anything about the actual living conditions of the people.

The people of Hunza have not in the least benefited by the visitors that have reached Hunza, and if future visits are discouraged, I believe there would be good cause for it.

Most of the diseases known to civilization are unknown in Hunza. I do not ask you to take my word for it but that is my report from consulting the resident doctor in Hunza, as well as a German woman doctor who visited Hunza.

It is further true that the Mir's wife, the Rani of Hunza, had her appendix removed and she took a trip to Rawalpindi to have it done. But in the first place she does not live according to Hunza standards and besides, it was probably stylish to have an appendix operation. On the other hand, if a good surgeon were let loose in Hunza for a few weeks, there's no doubt about it, he'd have hundreds of appendixes removed before he could be stopped.

Another important point that I wish to make at this time is that I paid my own way to and from Hunza. I had no financial backing. Therefore I am not committed to aid anyone or any product or radio station or newspaper. I have no one to fear and no one to please. I can afford to tell the truth.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

CHAPTER 44

Health

For Me To Say that the Hunzans are the healthiest people of the world, which many authors and writers have claimed, would be sheer effrontery . . . mainly because I have not studied the health of all the peoples of the world, nor have I even met them. However, I do attest from what I have seen and observed, that the Hunzans are one of the healthiest people of the world.

To say that they are completely free from diseases or health problems is definitely not true. At the time when I visited Hunza there was a resident doctor located at Aliabad, where he was in charge of a 10-bed hospital. I conversed with him and questioned him daily during my stay and he answered my pressing questions with complete frankness and candor.

He is only a young man, a Pakistani, and his name is Dr. Mohammed Yusuf Khan, M.B., B.S. He is a handsome, capable, well educated doctor and is, in my

759 115 humble opinion, equal to the best medical men that we can turn out of the European or American universities. Besides his medical degree, he also has a bachelor of science degree which most of our doctors do not have. So if anything, he is perhaps a little bit better learned than our average physician.

164 One of the first questions that I asked of the Mir of Hunza was, "Are there many known epileptics?"

The Mir thought for a moment and then shook his head and said, "No!"

So I turned to the doctor who was on my left and said, "Doctor, do you know of any epileptics in Hunza?"

At that instant the Mir got up and left the room . . . and I wondered about this.

There was a definite purpose behind my question concerning epilepsy. You see, it has always been my conviction—or at least for ~~25 years~~—that epilepsy is strictly nutritional. Of the few epileptics that I knew in my life all had peculiar eating habits . . . that is, they had their positive likes and dislikes . . . and from that day to this I have believed that epilepsy was basically nutritional.

"Yes," the doctor replied, "right at this present time I am treating three epileptic patients. One is from Nagir and two are from entirely different locations in Hunza. But the Nagir case is one of these dream cases —the kind that every doctor hopes he'll come across some day in his work."

"Yes," he went on, "this Nagir case performs every act described in the medical journals. He's a perfect textbook case. The sick man has every condition, symptom and manifestation of epilepsy known to medical science."

Statistics indicate that in America there is one epileptic to every 350 of the population. The population of

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
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value to the people of Hunza? Let's examine them. 000

Let's start with pasteurization. Well, it would be very difficult to pasteurize in Hunza. First of all, they don't have the means of providing the required heat. Besides, they don't suffer from any conditions which pasteurization would cure—if it does cure anything. 744

How about hospitalization? Well, they have a comparatively new, modern hospital in Aliabad, but the people don't use it very much. They distrust the hospital and they distrust the doctor, even though he is a fine capable fellow. Besides, I did not notice, particularly, any sick or ailing people sitting around, waiting for a hospital bed. 743

Then how about inoculations? To begin with, what would you inoculate them against? They don't seem to have many, if any, of our diseases. Then, too, there are no inoculations against cancer, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis and such, anyway. Oh, yes . . . besides, these diseases have never been known in Hunza . . . not even poliomyelitis. 751 164

The Mir has a huge medicine chest that was given to him by the German expedition, which was stationed across the river in Nagir. Yes, it did prove most useful —for it helped a man get well. However, I must admit rather dejectedly that the man the medicine chest helped was my companion and not a citizen of Hunza. 757 177 123

They could use a dentist and right here you have struck gold! However, it would be most difficult to get a dentist to set up shop in Hunza, unless he were given room in the Mir's residence, for that's the only place where electric power is provided . . . unless the dentist didn't mind going back to the old days when the old foot pedal was used for power. 759 164

But let's be realistic about it! Wouldn't it be much better to give the people of Hunza back their old [263]

• 759 164 .263 natural salt, which was mined at the confluence of the Mustagh and Shimshal Rivers? Then a dentist wouldn't be necessary. I trust you will pardon me if, here and there, as the situation demands, I become my own interrogator.

000 So after all is examined and said and done, how can the Western world help the people of Hunza?

If you asked me this question, I wouldn't want to answer it openly or boldly. But if you pressed me, reluctantly I'd say that the greatest contribution that the West can make to Hunza, or to their good health and longevity, is to stay away. Leave Hunza alone!

Somebody asked me if I would like to live in Hunza. In some respects, that is an unfair question.

It's like this. The climate of California is considered to be the most salubrious and pleasant in all of the United States. Well, why don't all the people of the United States move to California? Economic reasons? That might be a factor . . . but not a very important one. There are other considerations, too, I guess. But basically, everyone doesn't want to live in California—even if it has the most wonderful climate and they have sunshine all the time.

I'd love to go back to Hunza and spend a few more weeks there . . . and if I had been born in Hunza, I'm sure I'd never want to leave the place. But I doubt if, at my age, I'd be able to adjust myself to a change as drastic as the one I would have to meet in Hunza. After all, I am a product of Western civilization—whatever that is.

"Do you think conditions would be too difficult for you in Hunza?"

I believe a young, normal, healthy, strong individual of sound mind could adjust himself to the conditions of Hunza without too much trouble. I am not maintain-